

like the laws of the critics and the commandments of the churches, have been found out too often. They are too simple for life's complexities; they are self-contradictory; they are threadbare. Euripides himself, in his aphoristic moods reminds us uncomfortably of Sancho Panza. We, too, suffer from the inability of human beings to hold their tongues; we, too, face in our private lives the same 'ordeals by tattle'; we, too, have to listen to the admiratory noises of our friends before landscapes and works of art and, still worse, are expected to reply in kind; we have even in our own time seen armies perish for the failure of some one behind them in this simple art of silence; but it is in silence, on the whole, that we endure our lack of it. For, indeed, one of the most striking peculiarities of our age is that the intelligent have come in general to think less about improving the rest of mankind than ever before; whether from fatalism, because it is seldom possible to improve them, or from sceptical indifference amid the general breakdown of the imperative mood, or from a greater politeness in tolerating creeds of conduct that differ from our own. In consequence, moralists are almost extinct; they have given place to psychologists, and psychologists are scientists, and scientists think of truth and error, not of good and evil. The tree of silence still bears the fruit of peace, but we have no ears for truths put so. Yet it amuses me for a moment

to recall side by side with the directness of
such ancient
wisdom Proust's picture (so vivid, despite all
its exaggerations and improbabilities) of the tortured
unhappiness
of a modern passion; where the lover finds
the only
respite from his misery with Albertine in the
silent moments
of her sleep beside him, when peace
flowers an
instant, even for him, between the breasts of
despair. All
who have learnt how speech can come to
seem a means

YA